

**Secretary to the Forum**

(01243) 753542 (Direct)  
(01243) 753522 (Fax)  
fiona.macleod@westsussex.gov.uk

www.westsussex.gov.uk

**Countryside  
Access Forum  
for  
West Sussex**

County Hall  
West Street  
Chichester  
West Sussex  
PO19 1RQ  
01243 777100

If calling ask for

Our reference

Your reference

Fiona MacLeod

15<sup>th</sup> July 2008

**Chichester Harbour AONB Draft Management Plan 2009-2014 - consultation**

I am writing on behalf of the Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex (CAFWS), **an independent statutory advisory body** set up to give access advice to a number of bodies including all levels of government, in response to this consultation. The Forum works closely with West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and other local authorities and a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) has been developed by WSCC to pinpoint deficiencies in the present network of public rights of ways (prows) and to prioritise future access.

The Forum has a remit to protect and improve public access to the countryside including the coast and is keen to contribute to this consultation. The Forum would like to make the following comments within the consultation process as per the attached Appendix 1, focussing on Chapter 12 Enjoying Chichester Harbour from the Land.

CAFWS would like to emphasise the importance of considering the needs of the three main users of public rights of way (prows):

- **Walkers** – the need is to access the countryside and coast, especially using circular routes of various lengths; internal paths need to link up with the wider network of prows and other means of accessing the countryside and coast. Areas for **dog walking** must be accommodated.
- **Cyclists** – using cycle tracks and bridleways – an improved network will contribute to sustainable access to work and school
- **Horse riders** – riding is becoming a more and more important recreational activity around the urban fringe and contributes to the local economy

In addition, attention must be given to recreational access for all types of mobility impaired user groups, and Government initiatives highlighting the benefits of walking for health.

The Forum welcomes the opportunity to review the consultation and has confined its comments to its primary function – to protect and improve opportunities for people to access and enjoy the countryside and coast on foot, by cycle and by horse. In accordance with section 94(4) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Chichester Harbour Conservancy is required to have regard to relevant advice from this Forum in carrying out its functions.

The Forum hopes these comments are helpful and looks forward to being involved at all stages of this and future consultations.

Yours sincerely,



Fiona MacLeod  
Secretary  
Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex  
[www.westsussex.gov.uk/cafws](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/cafws)

Copy for information to:

Peter Brown – Chairman, CAFWS

Glynn Jones – Vice-Chairman, CAFWS

Lisa Creaye-Griffin - Group Manager, Rural Operations, WSCC

Jane Noble – Senior Access Officer, WSCC

Deborah Urquhart – WSCC Cabinet Member for Environment & Economy

All members of CAFWS

Nicky Horter (via email)  
Chichester Harbour Conservancy

**Chichester Harbour AONB Draft Management Plan 2009-2014**

**Comments from the Coastal Plain Sub Forum on behalf of the Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex (CAFWS)**

- 1. CROW Act (2000)** – CAFWS is pleased to see the reference to the Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs) under this legislation and will be pleased to cooperate with the Conservancy in implementing the Action Plan in due course. However, the other strand of the CROW Act – i.e. the new right of access to Open Country should be covered in the Plan in some depth as it is a new factor since the previous plan was adopted. A large part of the intertidal area, being registered common, has been opened up. It may be that in practice this has had little effect, but the new situation should be reported and evaluated in this document.
- 2. Tidal Paths** – The erosion of some paths has been a problem in recent years and the concerns are mentioned. However, a stronger policy should be included: there should be a commitment to ensure that all paths around the perimeter should be upgraded, where necessary, to provide reasonable access at all states of the tide. Where tidal paths can be rerouted along the edge of fields, this helps the walker but also reduces the disturbance to roosting birds.
- 3. Draft Marine Bill** – The issue of coastal access will, of course, be changed by this proposed legislation – it probably had not been announced when the Plan was drafted. It does need to be mentioned as it will undoubtedly affect the Conservancy's work if implemented.
- 4. Equestrians** – There is no mention of horse riding – possibly because there are no public bridleways within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (certainly not in West Sussex). However, horses are abundant in the area – especially the Manhood – and their needs should be recognised, even if they cannot be accommodated.
- 5. Long distance and strategic routes** – Overall, the Plan reads as if the AONB is an island and not part of a larger context. Thus, reference should be made to various current initiatives to establish promoted coastal paths (eg extension to the Solent Path) and Sustrans' development of the National Cycle Network through this area. These projects are important in themselves and do support local businesses, including green tourism.